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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to explore changes in occupational expectations of a sample of Texas youth within the framework of Ginzberg's formulation of "increasing realism of choice." Using standard multiple regression procedures, changes over time in level of occupational expectations were analyzed with respect to 4 sets of variables thought to reflect differential access to higher levels of occupational attainment. Variables included in the analysis were (1) race, family socio-economic index, (2) perception of occupational goal blockage, 3 measures of self-image, (3) changes in the perception of occupational goal blockage, and (4) changes in related status projections. Data were collected from a panel of 196 male, East Texas sophomores and, again, from the same individuals 2 years later when most were in their senior year of high school. An analysis of 4 multiple regression equations did not support Ginzberg's model of realistic development of occupational choice. An alternate mode of explanation is offered which includes 2 possibilities for further research. First, an argument for the adaptation or reformulation of present development models can be made. One hypothesis is that the period to begin realistic choice may occur in college, in vocational school, or even after entering the labor force. Second, occupational choice can be viewed from a dualistic perspective in which the occupational choices made by individuals operate in 2 widely differing ways depending largely upon the individual's occupational chances. (Author/HBC)

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THE DYNAMICS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS: A PARTIAL TEST OF GINZBERG'S THEORY*

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The objective of this research was to explore changes in occupational expectations of a sample of Texas Youth within the framework of Ginzberg's formulation of 'increasing realism of choice.' Using standard multiple regression procedures, changes over time in level of occupational expectations were analyzed with respect to four sets of variables thought to reflect differential access to higher levels of occupational attainment. Variables included in the analysis were: (1) race, family socio-economic index, (2) perception of occupational goal blockage, three measures of self-image. (3) changes in the perception of occupational goal blockage, and (4) changes in related status projections. Data were collected from a panel of 196 male, East Texas sophomores and, again, from the same individuals two years later when most were in their senior year of high school.

An analysis of four multiple regression equations did not support Ginzberg's model of realistic development of occupational choice. An alternate mode of explanation is offered.

THE DYNAMICS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATIONS: A PARTIAL TEST OF GINZBERG'S THEORY

INTRODUCTION

Theories of occupational development, occupational choice, and the more general concern for status development have quite often included the concept of 'realism of choice' as a central explanatory device. This highly abstract, conceptually vague, and operationally difficult concept forms the base for the majority of theories of change in occupational choice--especially in change in the late adolescent years. Put differently, the concept of 'realism of choice' is used to explain the change from early fantasy (goal-centered) choices of pre- and early adolescence to realistic (mean-centered) choices of late adolescence and early adulthood. This theoretical emphasis can be seen in statements by Ginzberg, et al. (1951), Super, (1953), Beilin (1955), Blau, et al., (1956), Tiedeman (1961), Kuvlesky (1970), and to a lesser extent, in statements by Holland (1959) and Slocum (1959).

Following the early lead of Ginzberg and his associates, many formulations have treated choice development as a function of social maturation structured in successive phases or stages. As the youth progresses from stage to stage, the nature of his choices are thought to vary according to the stage of the development. Ginzberg, for example, discusses the fantasy stage (pre-adolescence), the tentative stage (adolescence) and the realistic stage (late adolescence and early adulthood). Generally, as the youth moves from stage to stage, his occupational choices are thought to become more realistic and more focused. Furthermore, there is a narrowing of the range of occupations that he considers acceptable and his commitments to a particular occupational goal

or set of goals tends to increase.

According to this scheme, a critical period is the transition from the tentative to the realistic stage (approximately the senior year in high school) -- a transition from idealistic to realistic choice. Quoting Ginzberg, as the youth passes through this period of development, he shifts:

> ...the focus of his approach from the predominately subjective factors --those of his interests, capacities, and values-- to the reality conditions which will play a large part in determining the final choice he is about to make.

Subsequent constructs have incorporated similar explanations that stress realism of choice. Super (1953) in his influential reaction to Ginzberg's theory elaborated on the realistic nature of compromise in the development process, in that compromise:

> ...is the crux of the problem of occupational choice and adjustment: the nature of the compromise between self and reality, the degree to which, and the conditions under which one yields to the other, and the way in which the compromise is effected.

Similarily, in discussing the application of general developmental principles to occupational choice, Beilin refers to the general developmental shift from egocentric to social behavior. He speaks of the ..."increase of realism with age. That is, the individual takes the social reality more into account in making a choice and presumably the choices themselves become more realistic." (Beilin, 1955).

Sociological treatments of the dynamics of occupational choice have differed little from the foregoing formulations. Kuvlesky, (1970), for example, in his presentation of a perspective for analyzing the "Dynamics of Occupational and Educational Status Projections" outlines a set of underlying assumptions which he considered that sociologists

make (sometimes implicitly) in their studies of status projections.

Quoting Kuvlesky, these were:

(1) The sociologists' basic interest in status projections is in utilizing these phenomena as a means of understanding vertical social mobility. This leads to marked tendency to concentrate attention only on the rank element of social positions (statuses). Yet, it seems quite clear that people can and probably do orient themselves toward other attributes of social position (Kuvlesky and Bealer 1966).

(2) It is presumed that individuals consciously orient themselves toward the future and cognitively structure their future social involvements.

(3) Given the presumed future orientation, it is further assumed that people are predominantly rational in developing logical alignments among various status projections, in the modification of these in terms of perceived reality factors, and in the relationship that exists between status projections and actual attainment.

(4) It is generally assumed that status projections represent mediating variables that evolve out of the socialization process and provide direction for future status placement by triggering appropriate anticipatory socialization (Lane and Ellis, 1968).

Many sociological treatments of the occupation choice process (often referred to in sociological literature as occupational status projections) frame their discussion in terms of different types or dimensions of occupational choices. Although there is considerable lack of agreement on appropriate terminology and perhaps on conceptual issues, at least two dimensions of choice have been widely recognized and utilized by sociologists in empirical research. The first of the dimensions, occupational aspirations, refers to the individuals' choice of an occupation that he desires or wishes to enter as his life's work. Second, there are occupational expectations which refer to the individual's choice of an occupation that he expects or anticipates entering as his life's work (Blau, et al., 1956; Glick, 1962; and Kuvlesky and Bealer,

1966). Of the two dimensions of choice outlined above, the second, expectations, is generally considered to more directly reflect choices made in a context of "realistic development."

The operational procedures used to elicit occupational aspiration responses often involve requesting the respondents to react to such open-ended questions as, "If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you most desire as a lifetime job?" It can be easily argued that the two expressions "completely free to choose any job" and "desire most" tend to encourage fantasy-like responses even if realistic choice development is occurring. This is to say, that the very nature of this type of operational procedure is in all likelihood not suitable for the analysis of "realism of choice."

The operational procedures used to determine the level of occupational expectations, on the other hand, should elicit responses that reflect "realistic development", if in fact it is occurring. The question used in this research to obtain measures of level of occupational expectations was:

> ...sometimes we are not always able to do what we want most. What kind of job do you <u>really expect</u> to have most of your life?

The first part of this question points out to the respondent that sometimes his aspirations or his desires may not be fullfilled. The second part, stressing the expression "<u>really expect</u> to have as your life's work" asks the respondent to make a realistic accessment of what his life's work will be.

The central thesis of this report is that measures of occupational expectations taken over time and related to various attainment-linked variables will allow an estimate of increasing "realism of choice."

At a more concrete level, it is being posed that for most high school sophomores, responses to the occupational expectation question will be unrealistic--unrealistic in the sense used by Ginzberg in that the responses will be determined more by "subjective factors as interest, capacities and values" rather than such reality factors as family socio-economic status, race, residence, and intelligence. By the senior year, however, the so-called "reality factors" will play a large role in the responses given to the expectation question. Therefore, it is anticipated that realistic development would be reflected by changes in occupational expectations where respondents characterized by variable levels indicating limited occupational chances would tend to lower their levels of expectation and respondents with variable levels indicating relatively favorable occupational chances would either retain their sophomore expectation levels or even increase their expectation levels.

From the foregoing discussion, the following set of propositions was derived relating changes in level of occupational expectation with sets of "reality-linked" factors.

Proposition 1

Developmental changes in occupational expectations between middle and later adolescence (Ginzberg's tentative stage) will vary according to social statuses thought to be indicative of differential access to higher prestige occupational attainment. Statuses considered to encourage differential access include race and socioeconomic status. This is to say, as youth pass from earlier (fantasy-like) choices to later (more realistic) choices there will be a tendency for expectation changes to become more aligned with and reflect the differential access statuses.

More specifically, adolescents occupying those lower access statuses would tend to decrease their level of expectations over time and perhaps there may be a weaker tendency for those students occupying higher access stauses to increase their level of expectations over time. From this proposition, the following hypotheses are developed:

Hypothesis Ia:

Changes in the level of occupational expectation scores (Y), controlling for race (X_2), will vary directly with family socio-economic status (X_1).

Hypothesis Ib:

Black adolescents, controlling for family socio-economic index (X_1) will be more likely to decrease their level of occupational expectations (Y) than white adolescents.

Regression Model I:

$$Y = \beta o \pm \beta_1 X_1 \pm \beta_2 X_2 \pm \varepsilon$$

$Ho I\alpha : \beta_1 \leq 0$ $\qquad$ $Ho I\alpha : \beta_1 > 0$

$Ho I\beta : \beta_2 \geq 0$ $\qquad$ $H_1 I\beta : \beta_2 < 0$

Proposition II:

Developmental changes in occupational expectations (Y) will vary according to the adolescent's perception of influences either internal or external that he feels might impede his occupational attainment. This proposition is the social-psychological equivalent to differential access status statement in Proposition I. To elaborate, changes in

occupational expectations (Y) will become more aligned with perception of blockage to attainment of occupational goals, i.e., perceived effect of such factors as race, jobs in community and nearness of colleges and training schools. Youth perceiving high goal blockage will be more likely to lower their expectation levels. Likewise, the adolescent's perception of his own capabilities (self-image) would also vary with changes in the level of occupational expectations. It is expected that youth with low self-image scores will lower their previously high level occupational expectations. Three types of self-image measures were considered: physical, academic and social.

Hypothesis IIa:

Changes in the level of occupational expectations (Y) over time controlling for level of self-image (X_{4p}, X_{4a}, X_{4s}) will vary inversely with perception of occupational goal blockage (X_3).

Hypothesis IIb:

Change over time in the level of occupational expectations (Y), controlling for perception of occupational goal blockage (X_3), will vary directly with measures of level of self-image (X_{4p}, X_{4a}, and X_{4s}).

Regression Model II:

$$Y = \beta_0 \pm \beta_3 X_3 \pm \beta_{4_p} X_{4_p} \pm \beta_{4_a} X_{4_a} \pm \beta_{4_s} X_{4_s} \pm \varepsilon$$

$HoIIa$: $\beta_3 \geq 0$	H_1IIa: $\beta_3 < 0$
$HoII_b$: $\beta_{4_a} \leq 0$	H_1II_b: $\beta_4 > 0$
$\beta_{4_p} \leq 0$	$\beta_4 > 0$
$\beta_{4_s} \leq 0$	$\beta_4 > 0$

Proposition III:

Developmental changes in level of occupational expectations (Y) will vary inversely with changes in the perception of occupational goal blockage (X_5). That is, if adolescents become more realistic in their occupational expectations over time, it would be expected that increases in the awareness or perception of factors limiting attainment (goal blockage) would be associated with decreases in the level of occupational expectations.

Hypothesis III:

Changes in occupational expectations (Y) over time will be inversely related to changes in the perception of occupational goal blockage (X_5).

Regression Model III:

$$\gamma = \beta o \pm \beta_5 X_5 \pm \varepsilon$$

$$HoIII: \beta_5 \geq 0 \qquad H_1III: \beta_5 < 0$$

Proposition IV:

Developmental changes in the level of occupational expectations (Y) will vary directly with changes in the levels of other related status projections. More specifically, changes over time in the level of occupational expectations over time will vary directly with changes in the levels of occupational aspirations (X_4) and the level of educational expectations (X_7). The rationale for this proposition is that increasing "realism of choice" would be reflected across related status projection areas. Thus an adolescent who had had high level education expectations, occupational aspirations, and occupational expectations and who had

over time lowered his occupational expectations, could be expected to also lower the level of these other status projections.

Hypothesis IVa:

Changes over time in the level of occupational expectations over time controlling for changes in level of occupational aspirations (X_7) will vary directly with changes in the level of educational expectations (X_6).

Hypothesis IVb:

Changes over time in the level of occupational expectations (Y) over time controlling for changes in the level of educational expectations (X_6) will vary directly with changes in the level of occupational aspirations (X_7).

Regression Model IV:

$$Y = \beta_0 \pm \beta_6 X_6 \pm \beta_7 X_7 \pm \varepsilon$$

$Ho IVa: \beta_6 \leq 0$ $\quad$ $H_1 IVa: \beta_6 > 0$

$Ho IVb: \beta_7 \leq 0$ $\quad$ $H_1 IV_b: \beta_7 > 0$

Data Collection

The data utilized in this analysis were collected from interviews with a panel of 196 East Central Texas high school age youths over a two year period. In the spring of 1966 group-administered questionnaires were given to all high school sophomores present the day of the interview in three low income rural counties in Texas. In the 1960 census, each county was classified 100 percent rural.

In the spring of 1968, a second contact (T2) was made to reinterview

these same youths. The majority of the panel was contacted using group-administered interviews similar to the 1966 sophomore interview. Attempts were also made to contact youths who had either moved from the original three counties or had dropped out of school through the use of personal interviews and mailed questionnaires. Using the aforementioned procedures, eighty-nine percent of the original sample was recontacted. Sample mortality was highest among high school dropouts--approximately one-half of the 1968 panel's losses had dropped out of school.

Variable Description

Y = Changes in the level of occupational expectations (1966-1968): Responses to occupational expectations both in 1966 and 1968 were coded according to Duncan's socio-economic index (SEI) scores. Y was derived by subtracting 1966 SEI scores from 1968 SEI scores. Positive Y values represent increases in expectations over time, a zero Y value indicates no change and negative Y values indicate decreases in expectations.

X_1 = Family socio-economic status (1966): Family socio-economic status was determined by asking the occupation of the main family breadwinner. These responses were coded according to SEI.

X_2 = Race of respondent: White respondents were given a code of one and Black respondents, a code of two.

X_3 = Level of occupational goal blockage (1966): Level of occupational goal blockage was elicited by asking the respondent how much effect each of the following factors would have in keeping him from getting the type of job desired: (1) not enough money to go to technical school or college; (2) the schools he had gone to; (3) lack of parent

interest; (4) his race; (5) not wanting to move; (6) scarcity of good jobs in the U.S.; (7) lack of good job opportunities near his community; (8) no technical school or college nearby; and (9) not knowing enough about the opportunities that exist. Alternate degrees of effect were specified: (1) very much; (2) much; (3) some and (4) not at all. These responses were combined into a simple additive index of perception of goal blockage. Low scores indicated higher levels of perceived occupational goal blockage and high scores indicated lower levels of perceived occupational goal blockage.

X_{4p} = Self Image (Physical 1966): The respondents were asked to what extent the following described their physical status: (1) energetic; (2) strong; (3) attractive; (4) athletic; and (5) graceful. Responses to each iter were structured: (1) very; (2) somewhat and (3) not at all. These were scored 3 through 1 respectively and combined into a simple index.

X_{4a} = Self Image (Academic 1966): The respondents were asked to what extent the following described their academic status: (1) talented; (2) successful; (3) thorough; (4) dynamic; and (5) intelligent. Responses were again structured: (1) very; (2) somewhat and (3) not at all. These were scored 3 through 1 respectively and totaled to form a simple index of academic self-image.

X_{4s} = Self Image (Social 1966): The respondents were asked to what extent the following described them in social relations: (1) cooperative; (2) dynamic;)3) accepted; (4) popular and (5) self-confident. Responses were again structured as with variables X_{4p} and X_{4a}. Responses were totaled resulting in a simple index.

X_5 = Change in Level of Perceived Occupational Goal Blockage

(1966-1968): Responses to items to determine level of Perceived Goal Blockage was obtained both in 1966 and 1968. X_5 was determined by subtracting 1966 index value from the 1968 value.

X_6 = Change in Level of Educational Expectations (1966-1968): Structured responses to level of Educational Expectations were obtained both in 1966 and 1968. X_6 was determined by substracting 1966 level of expectation from the 1968 level.

X_7 = Change in Level of Occupational Aspirations (1966-1968): Responses to questions designed to elicit occupational aspirations both in 1966 and 1968 were coded according to Duncan's SEI. X_7 was obtained by subtracting 1966 scores from 1968 scores.

Changes in Expectation Values

The analysis of the distribution of Y values revealed a strong tendency for the respondents to change their level of occupational expectations--with about as many increasing as decreasing, resulting in little net change in expectation levels (See Table 1). The high propensity for change was reflected in the observation that of the 196 respondents, 158 or 81% gave different expectational responses over the two year period.

Table 1: Change in level of Occupational Expectations (Y) between Sophomore and Senior Years

Increase in Y	43% (N=84)
Decrease in Y	38% (N=74)
No change in Y	19% (N=38)
Mean Value in Y	-0.34
Standard Deviation	32.58
Range	(-) 92 to (+) 70

Although the high rate of change was not necessarily surprising, the finding that more respondents increased (43%) their level of expectation than decreased it (38%) was not anticipated by the researchers. The high variability of expectations was further reflected in Y values ranging from a -92 to a + 70 SEI increments. The mean Y value was approximately zero indicating little net change.

Analysis of Proposition I:

The first proposition considered the relationship between changes in occupational expectations (Y) and such status linked variables as family socio-economic status (X_1) and race (X_2). Two research hypotheses were derived predicting a significant positive beta for X_1 and a significant negative beta for X_2. The resulting regression equation (Model 1) was (See Table 2):

$$\gamma = 25.970 - 0.109_{x1} - 16.444_{x2} + \varepsilon$$

The analysis of variance indicated that the regression equation was statistically significant ($F = 5.467$ and $P < .006$). The coefficient of determination, however, was only .054 indicating that the model had low explanatory power.

Table 2: Evaluation of Regression Model 1: Change in Level of Occupational Expectations as a Function of Family Socio-Economic Status and Race

ANOV For Regression:

Source	DF	Mean Square	F	Probability	R^2
Regression	2	5547.302	5.467	0.005	.054
Error	193	1014.732			
Total	195				

Hypothesis:

Ho	B Value	STDb Value	T	Probability	Decision
HoIa ($B_1 \leq 0$)	-0.109	-0.069	-0.632	0.632	HoIa Not Rejected
HoIb ($B_2 \geq 0$)	-16.444	-0.251	-3.273	0.002	HoIb Rejected in favor of $H_1 I_b$

B_1 = Beta for Family Socio-Economic Status

B_2 = Beta for Race

A statistically significant relationship was not formed between change in level of occupational expectations (Y) and level of family socio-economic status (X_1). The null hypothesis ($B_1 < 0$) could not be rejected. The beta for X_1 was -0.109 with a t of -0.632 ($P = 0.632$).

There was a significant tendency for Black respondents to lower their level of expectations. The null hypothesis ($B_2 \geq 0$) was rejected in favor of ($B_2 < 0$). The beta for race (X_2) was -16.444 with a t of -3.273 ($P < .002$).

Analysis of Proposition II:

Proposition II related changes in level of occupational goal blockage (X_3) and three measures of self-image--Physical (X_{4p}), Academic (X_{4a}), and Social (X_{4s}). Research hypotheses were derived predicting a negative beta for X_3 and positive betas for X_{4p}, X_{4a}, and X_{4s}. Regression model II resulted in the following statistics (See Table 3).

$$Y = +37.830 + 0.22X_3 + 0.236X_{4p} - 1.169X_{4a} - 3.015X_{4s} + \varepsilon$$

The general regression model was not found to be statistically significant by analysis of variance. The F ratio was 2.067 with $P = .085$.

Table 3: Evaluation of Regression Model II: Change in Level of Occupational Expectations as a Function of Perceived Occupational Goal Blockage*

ANOV for Regression:

Source	DF	Mean Square	F	Probability	R^2
Regression	4	2165.07	2.067	.085	.043
Error	185	1047.35			
Total	189				

Hypothesis:

Ho	B Value	STDb Values	t	Probability	Decision
$HoII_a$ ($B_3 \geq 0$)	0.222	0.032	0.447	0.660	HoIIa not rejected
$HoII_b$ ($B_{4p} \leq 0$)	0.236	0.015	0.176	0.855	HoIIb not rejected
($B_{4a} \leq 0$)	-1.169	-0.062	-0.709	0.514	HoIIb not rejected
($B_{4s} \leq 0$)	-3.015	-0.170	-1.783	0.073	HoIIb not rejected

B_3 = Beta for Perceived Occupational Goal Blockage (X_3)

B_{4p} = Beta for Self Image (Physical) (X_{4a}).

B_{4a} = Beta for Self Image (Academic) (X_{4a}).

B_{4s} = Beta for Self Image (Social) (X_{4s}).

*Six cases of incomplete information not included in the analysis.

A statistically significant relationship was not found between changes in level of expectations (Y) and levels of perceived occupational goal blockage (X_3). The null hypothesis ($B_3 \geq 0$) was not rejected. The beta for X_3 was 0.222 with a t of 0.447 (P = 0.660).

A statistically significant relationship was not found between change in level of occupational expectations and physical self image (X_{4p}). The null hypothesis ($B_{4p} \leq 0$) could not be rejected. The beta for X_{4p} was 0.236 with a t of 0.176 (P = 0.855).

A statistically significant relationship was not found between change in level of occupational expectations and academic self image (X_{4a}). The null hypothesis ($B_{4a} \leq 0$) could not be rejected. The beta for X_{4a} was -1.169 with a t of -0.709 (P = 0.514).

A statistically significant relationship was not found between changes in level of occupational expectations and social self image (X_{4s}). The null hypothesis ($B_{4s} < 0$) could not be rejected. The beta for X_{4s} was -3.015 with a t of -1.1783 (P = 0.073).

Analysis of Proposition III:

Proposition III stated that a relationship should exist between changes of level of occupational expectations (Y) and changes in the level of perceived occupational goal blockage (X_5). The corresponding research hypothesis was $B_5 \leq 0$. The following regression equation was calculated.

$$\gamma = -.076 + 0.247X_5 + \varepsilon$$

A statistically significant relationship was not found between changes in level of occupational expectations and changes in perception of occupational goal blockage. The analysis of variance for regression resulted in a F- ratio of 0.291 (P = 0.597). The null hypothesis ($B_5 \geq 0$) could not be rejected.

Table 4. Evaluation of Regression Model III: Change in Level of Occupational Expectations as a Function of Changes in Perceived Occupational Goal Blockage.*

ANOV for Regression:

Source	DF	Mean Square	F	Probability	R^2
Regression	1	305.951	0.291	0.597	0.002
Error	178	1051.175			
Total	179				

Hypothesis:

Ho	B Value	STDb Values	t	Probability	Decision
HoIII ($B_5 > 0$)	0.247	0.040	0.539	0.597	HoIII not rejected

B_5 = Beta for changes in Perceived Occupational Goal Blockage

* 16 cases of incomplete information not included in the analysis.

Analysis of Proposition IV:

Proposition IV stated that a positive relationship would be found between level of occupational expectations (Y) and changes in other related status projection, e.g., change in level of educational expectations (X_6) and changes in level of occupational aspirations (X_7). Two research hypothesis were derived with predictions of $B_6 > 0$ and $B_7 > 0$. The following regression equation was calculated:

$$Y = -0.45 + 5.551X_6 + 0.400X_7 + \varepsilon$$

The regression model was found to be statistically significant by analysis of variance. The F- ratio was found to be 20.656 ($P < .0002$). The coefficient of determination was .179 indicating that about 18% of variation in Y can be explained by the two variables X_6 and X_7.

Table 5: Evaluation of Regression Model IV: Change in Level of Occupational Expectations as a Function of Changes in Level of Educational Expectations and Occupational Aspirations.*

ANOV for Regression:

Square	DF	Mean Square	F	Probability	R^2
Regression	2	18312.138	20.656	.0002	.179
Error	190	886.531			
Total	192				

Hypothesis:

Ho	B Value	STDb Values	t	Probability	Decision
$HoIV_6$ ($B \leq 0$)	5.551	0.215	3.252	.002	$HoIV_6$ Rejected in favor of $H_1 IV_6$
$HoIV_7$ ($B \leq 0$)	0.400	0.347	5.252	.0001	$HoIV_7$ Rejected in favor of $H_1 IV_7$

B_6 = Beta for Change in Level of Educational Expectations (X_6).

B_7 = Beta for Change in Level of Occupational Aspirations (X_7).

* 3 cases of incomplete information deleted from the analysis.

A statistically significant relationship was found between changes in level of occupational expectations (Y) and changes in level of educational expectations (X_6). The null hypothesis ($B \leq 0$) was rejected in favor of the research hypothesis ($B > 0$). The beta for X_6 was +5.551 with a t of 3.252 ($P < .002$).

A statistically significant relationship was found between changes in level of occupational expectations (Y) and changes in level of occupational aspirations (X_7). The null hypothesis ($B_7 \leq 0$) was rejected in favor of the research hypothesis ($B_7 > 0$). The beta for X_7 was +0.400 with a t of 5.252 ($P < .0002$).

Discussion

The objective of this research was to explore changes in the level of occupational expectations of a panel of high school age youth from the perspective of "increasing realism of choice". Ginzberg's hypotheses, a position that has been widely accepted judging from the literature, states that over time adolescents' choices become increasingly realistic--

with the high school senior year being a critical transition period. More specifically, the research was concerned with the question, "Do changes in the occupational expectations of high school age youth become more realistic between the sophomore and senior year?" Realistic changes were considered to be changes that resulted in the expectation levels becoming more consistent with: (1) statuses linked to actual occupational attainment; (2) perception of occupational goal blockage; (3) self-image; (4) changes over time in the perception of occupational goal blockage and (5) changes over time in related status projections.

The findings of the present research, although mixed, did not generally support the hypotheses of "increasing realism of choice". For example, it would have been anticipated that if expectations for the aggregate had become more realistic by the senior year, the simple distribution of changes in level of expectations (Y) would have been much different than observed. A majority of the panel would have decreased their level of expectations instead of the slight majority that reported increases. Furthermore, the absolute mean value of Y should have been larger in the direction of decreasing expectations. Since the Y distribution did not exhibit either of these conditions, there was no evidence of realistic change for the aggregate.

In considering the aforementioned interpretation of the distribution of the changes in level of occupational expectations two additional considerations should be brought to mind. First, the level of expectations reported in the sophomore contact were quite high, i.e., well over 50% expected to enter high level occupations. Thus, there was ample opportunity for a downward change. Second, it should be remembered that the respondents were from low income rural counties--a

population generally considered to have special difficulties in occupational attainment.

Four propositions were formulated with derived hypotheses to further analysis realism of choice. The findings were less than consistent. Two of the propositions (Propositions II and III) were not supported. Statistically significant relationships were not found between either Y and level of occupational goal blockage and three measures of self-image, or Y and changes over time in the level of occupational goal blockage.

The failure to find in this data set the relationships predicted from Propositions II and III brings into question the utility of the realism hypothesis--at least in this period. The variables in each model derived from these two porpositions were perceptual variables--perception of factors that the respondents thought would effect the attainment of their goals, changes over time in the perception of these same factors and their perception of self (self-image). In the transition from fantasy to realistic choice, from goal-centered to mean-centered choice, the adolescent would be expected to bring these factors into account in his choice development. Yet of the five hypotheses tested, none resulted in the predicted relationships.

The only finding that clearly supported the realism formulation was the second hypothesis derived from Proposition I relating race to changes in expectation levels. There was a significant tendency for black youth to lower their levels of expectations. The other hypothesis linking family socio-economic status to changes in expectations was not supported. In evaluating the substantive import of the race findings, it should be noted that although the probability level was highly significant ($P<.002$) the coefficient of determination was a slight .054 and thus the predictive

value of race (X_1) was very low.

Statistically significant relationships were found for each of the hypothesis derived from Proposition IV relating changes in expectation levels to changes in related status projections (occupational aspirations and educational expectations). Each beta was found to be statistically significant in the predicted direction and the coefficient of determination for the regression model IV, while not overwhelming, was three times as large as that found for race. Even in light of these findings, the researchers did not feel that the results actually provided support for the realism formulation for the following reasons. First, proposition IV was constructed under the assumption that as youth become "realistic" the effects of this change would be across related status projections and thus a positive relationship would exist among changes in related status projection. It would be equally plausible that if another factor was producing changes in Y, a factor other than realism of choice, it might be expected to produce the same sort of changes observed in the analysis of Proposition IV. Thus the interpretation of the results here are logically dependent in large part on the results of the first three propositions, which were not supported. In fact, if the four sets of findings are combined, it appears that a factor or factors other than realism of choice are producing the observed changes in Y.

Implications

If the findings of the aforementioned types are substantiated in parallel research, it is apparent that alternate explanations of choice development should be constructed or that the presently accepted models should be restructured. If we momentarily assume that the

research findings have been substantiated, at least two intriguing possibilities come to mind.

First, an argument for the adaptation or reformulation of present developmental models can be made. When confronted with changes in choices not conforming to the developmental model, "die-hard" developmentalists quickly point out that the general developmental principles may still hold and that the thinking about the period of increasing realism was merely out of phase. For example, one might hypothesize that the period of fantasy choice extends further than previously believed and, therfore, the process of realization of choice had not yet begun by the senior year of high school--this would explain the failure to find the anticipated relationship in this study. This argument becomes more appealing when one considers the history of social and cultural changes in the United States during the last thirty years--especially the changing concept of when a youth complete his formal education. When Ginzberg and Super were first publishing their models of choice development, the high school degree was considered to represent for many a terminal degree and as sufficient training to enter the work force. The increased emphasis on higher education and the devaluation of the high school degree may have discouraged realistic choices among high school students and even decreased the necessity for making such choices in high school. That is, in our present culture, the period to begin realistic choice may occur in college, in vocational school, or even after entering the labor force--the rites of passage into the labor market has become more diffused.

Second, one might introduce a completely different formulation that is probably inconsistent with the thinking of most projection

researchers. A more powerful way to view occupational choices might be from a dualistic perspective--a perspective surprisingly that might easily be linked to a general conflict theory of stratification. The occupational choices made by individuals operate in two widely differing ways depending largely upon the individuals' occupational chances. If we assume that American youth are characterized by two chance groupings (one with a high probability of attainment of relatively high prestige occupations and the second group with a high probability of low prestige attainment), it is quite reasonable to expect that occupation choices (aspirations, plans, expectations) would perform different functions for each. Second, if we assume a Mertonian mass cultural value of occupational success across both groups, the following dualistic model can be constructed.

In the high attainment group (roughly youth from the middle and upper strata), occupational choices would conform to the goal directed developmental model as presented by Ginzberg and utilized throughout much of the projection literature.

Choices for the low attainment group, however, may have little direct bearing on attainment. Instead they provide a psychological crutch, a compensating influence for failure in a success-oriented society. The worker in a low prestige occupation or the youth in high school with little chance for high attainment can adjust to the success value by planning, expecting, projecting success into the future. He can accept failure to meet past projections by substituting new ones. Thus, realistic choice would be of too high a psychological cost for this group and would run counter to American cultural values.

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